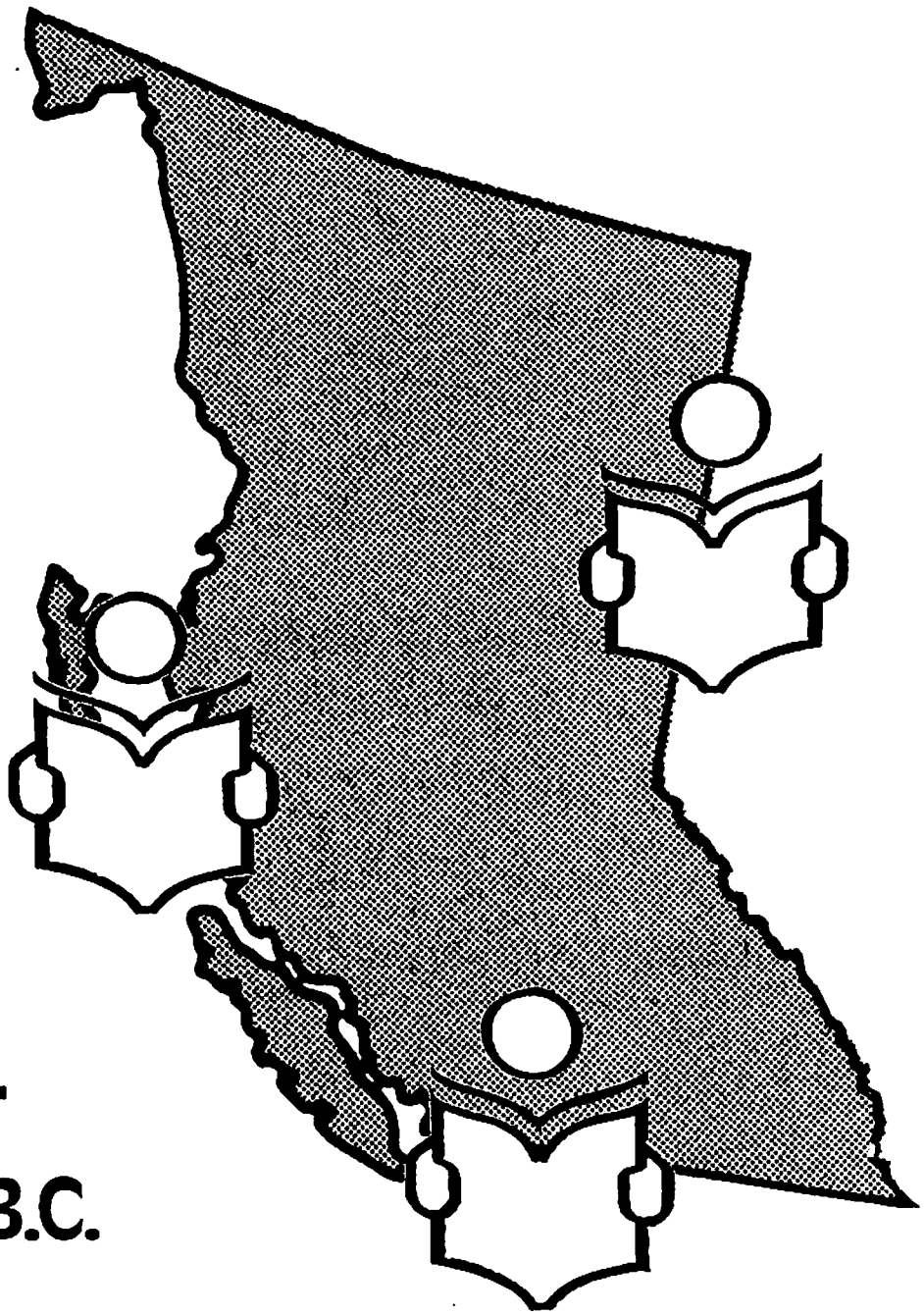
CONSULTATION REPORT



"Inventing the Future" for PROJECT LITERACY B.C.

November 24 and 25, 1988
Richmond, B.C.

Project Literacy B.C. Consultation
November 24-25, 1988

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since Project Literacy B.C. began to meet in the spring of 1986, many people from around B.C. have called the office of the Adult Basic Education Association to ask how to start a Project Literacy B.C. in their communities. Several groups have actually formed and others are serious about doing so. Many of their questions could not be answered, however, since there has existed no formal relationship between these groups and Project Literacy B.C.

On November 24 and 25, we were able to bring people from all over the province together to address the issue of community involvement in the literacy campaign. It was hoped that information would be exchanged and plans formulated which would ensure the most effective role for local groups and for the provincial organization. Eighteen participants met in Richmond to discuss these concerns. They were able, also, to attend the monthly meeting of Project Literacy B.C.

From these positive and productive gatherings came many recommendations about the future of Project Literacy B.C. The main ones were:

- that we form a provincial organization called PROJECT LITERACY B.C. which will be registered under the Society's Act and which will attempt to receive charitable tax status
- that all recommendations be brought before local groups for approval and
- that a committee be struck to forge a constitution.

Nancy Jennings, Inger Weber, Ron Stinson, and Joyce Ansell were appointed to this committee, with Nancy agreeing to chair. Input and questions can be directed to her through the Adult Literacy Contact Centre (594-0664). Guidelines and recommendations were given to the committee at this meeting and are contained in the body of this report.

"INVENTING THE FUTURE" was:

Sponsored by: The Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

Partially funded by: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training and the Department of the Secretary of State.

All meetings chaired by: Norma Kidd, President ABEABC; Chair, Project Literacy B.C.

Report prepared by: Helen E. Hellofs, Director, Adult Literacy Contact Centre, 11091 - 72nd Avenue, Delta, B.C. V4E 1Y4, 594-0664.

Thursday, November 24 (7:00-9:00 p.m.)
Meeting Room #101, "Stay and Save" Motel,
10551 St. Edwards St., Richmond, B.C. V6X 3L8 (604) 273-3311

Summary of Meeting: *The meeting began with introductions and reports. Representatives described activities in their various communities and their expectations of this Consultation. Norma gave a background on Project Literacy B.C. and its relationship to the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. She reaffirmed the Association's commitment to quality literacy programs. During the ensuing discussion many questions were put forth and, since they were to determine the next day's discussion, they are summarized below. Although individual communities have vastly different conditions of program delivery and local involvement, many common concerns were expressed and are listed below. Cautions and reminders were given and provided a valuable guide to further discussion. The evening ended with a "getting to know you" wine and cheese.*

Questions: What is Project Literacy B.C.? How do we become members? Should PLBC become a formal society? Do we need guidelines for the formation of local community groups? How can PLBC be most effective for all communities of B.C.? How would we name local groups? Shall PLBC be separate from the AEBEABC? Where do we get funds for local programs? How do we get community decision makers to care about literacy? How can the Adult Literacy Contact Centre be most useful to local groups within the parameters of its present mandate and with future proposals? Who can use the public service annoucements and posters developed by the Adult Literacy Contact Centre?

Common Needs:

- for funding of programs
- for data, statistics, and research which will assist local campaigns
- to define "literacy" (and address related issues such as Native Literacy)
- for guidance with media development
- for community interest and support
- for a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of community groups and Project Literacy B.C.
- for guidance about excellence in tutor training
- for guidance about evaluation of programs
- for an "identity" (as in affiliation with PLBC)
- to establish literacy as a right
- to become politically sophisticated, raising the profile of literacy for a provincial organization whose mandate and commitment is literacy alone

Cautions which helped to prepare us for discussion included reminders of confusion over the name PROJECT LITERACY B.C., of the dangers inherent in fragmented or duplicated activity, of the chance for misuse of our registered name, of the wasted effort which can occur when guidelines are unclear, and of the necessity that local activities not be stifled by provincial directive.

Friday, November 25 (10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)
PROJECT LITERACY B.C. — King Edward Campus,
Vancouver Community College, 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.

Summary of Meeting: *Participants in the Consultation had the opportunity to join in the monthly meeting of Project Literacy B.C. and to see how it functions as an information sharing forum with representation from many sectors of the community. Following a format which has become typical, participants introduced themselves and reported upon their current literacy initiatives. (The majority of announcements from Project Literacy B.C. meetings appear in the Adult Literacy Contact Centre newsletter which is sent automatically to anyone who has attended a meeting. People who are unable to attend can phone the Contact Centre (594-0664) to receive these monthly letters at no charge)*

In addition to the reports and introductions, the agenda of this meeting included the change to view an impressive video on the Invergarry Adult Learning Centre in Surrey. For copies or further information, people should call Lee Weinstein at 584-5424.

After a conversation-packed coffee break in which many new connections were made, we began to discuss the operation of Project Literacy B.C. for 1989. For the benefit of new participants, Norma reviewed her description of Project Literacy B.C. as a committee of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. She also outlined the Association's other committees and projects (of which the Adult Literacy Contact Centre is one.)

It was obvious to the meeting that some reorganizing of Project Literacy B.C. would have to take place to allow for provincial involvement. Suggestions were offered for restructuring, for getting reps to meetings, and for possible name changes but it was strongly advised that none of this happen without approval from all Project Literacy groups. A very definite warning was given to the group that we must do nothing to destroy the momentum of the present Project Literacy B.C. Any transition to a more formal structure must be gradual and meetings will continue as usual until changes have been approved. A provincial group must ENHANCE, not INHIBIT, local activity.

Participants were reminded that 1990 is UNESCO's "Year of Literacy", that the literacy logo is international so for anyone's use, and that promotional material prepared for Project Literacy B.C. is not copyrighted. People are encouraged to copy it and disperse it widely.

Friday, November 25 (1:30-3:00 p.m.)
Room #101, "Stay and Save" Motel,

Summary of Meeting: *This meeting started immediately to address the issues identified last night, being mindful of the cautions expressed at that meeting and the advice put forth by the morning session at Project Literacy B.C. The basic focus was one of how to maintain local autonomy while still providing the support of a provincial structure. It soon became apparent that we were not going to be able to answer all our questions in this short session but that we must take some action which will enable us to address them, in time.*

A motion was passed that, as soon as possible, we form a provincial organization, called PROJECT LITERACY B.C., which will be registered under the Society's Act of B.C. and that we begin to search for charitable tax status. It was moved, also, that a steering

committee be established to draft up a possible constitution which will be ratified by community groups. Inger Weber, Joyce Ansell, Ron Stinson, and Nancy Jennings agreed to sit on this committee and Nancy will be its chair.

The following were suggested as roles for the new PROJECT LITERACY B.C. by this meeting and should serve as a guide as the constitution is being prepared:

Functions for PROJECT LITERACY B.C.: (not in order of priority)

- To lobby provincial and federal organizations for funds.
- To operate a resource centre and to determine a relationship with the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.
- To work with communities to establish a method of ensuring program quality.
- To develop a model for tutor training.
- To pursue the media and to standardize advertising.
- To maintain and expand the provincial literacy network.
- To maintain connections with national/international literacy organization.
- To educate decision makers in the business, industry, government, labour, media and public sectors about literacy issues and to increase their commitment.
- To address the moral/ethical concerns involved in literacy training.
- To liaise with the Literacy Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training.
- To attempt to hold meetings throughout the province.
- To define "literacy" for PLBC purposes.
- To ensure that learners have a prominent voice in PLBC.
- To develop a model which incorporates local control and provincial standards.
- To focus on adult literacy.

For Immediate Action:

- The steering committee will meet to draft consitution. With questions or input, contact Nancy Jennings through the Adult Literacy Contact Centre (594-0664).
- Nancy asked that people begin to write letters to make new M.P.'s aware of the literacy problem.

"INVENTING THE FUTURE"
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